



NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN AND ADULTS



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April 8, 1959

The Honorable John Fogarty
Chairman, Labor-H.E.W. Subcommittee
House of Representatives
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Fogarty:

Thank you very much for your cordial note of March 10 acknowledging my letter of February 27, in which I advised you that the National Society's Executive Committee had endorsed the principles of H.R. 1119, and conveyed our recommendation that the medical direction of the administering agency be strengthened.

We are looking forward to an opportunity to present testimony at hearings on this Bill, to express our views of the problem to which the legislation is addressed, and to record our support of the principles of the program which you have proposed. Prior to presenting such testimony, however, I feel we need clarification of the intent of the makers of this Bill with respect to the construction of workshops and rehabilitation facilities. It is not clear from an examination of the Bill, whether such facilities would be constructed and operated by state rehabilitation agencies, or whether it is intended to support and extend facilities of voluntary non-profit agencies.

We note that the Bill states in this connection in Section 301 (a) that, "For the purpose of encouraging and assisting in the establishment of public and other non-profit workshops and rehabilitation facilities needed in rehabilitating physically and mentally handicapped individuals, there is hereby authorized, etc."

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The Honorable John Fogarty

April 8, 1959

However, Section 302 (a) states that, "From the sums made available pursuant to Section 301 of this title, the Secretary shall make grants for paying part of the cost incurred in the establishment of non-profit workshops and rehabilitation facilities . . ." The dissimilarity of these two statements in itself raises a question as to the intent.

Naturally, the National Society believes strongly in the development of voluntary services. Our more than thirty-five-year history has demonstrated both our capacity for developing such services and their value. The state and local affiliates of the National Society are now operating a number of workshops and rehabilitation facilities with a high degree of efficiency. Other voluntary agencies also have going programs in this area, among them Goodwill Industries, agencies serving the blind, and so forth. Almost without exception, these facilities could be expanded to care for greater numbers of people, were the necessary funds available. I believe it is of considerable importance that this proposed new legislation clearly indicate that it is the intent that the appropriations will be used first to support and extend existing voluntary facilities.

While we have previously indicated our support in principle, an extension of this type of endorsement to include all-out support of the specifics of this program, would, I am fairly confident, be dependent upon assurance that the legislation does not mean the establishment of substantial numbers of government built and operated workshops and rehabilitation facilities.

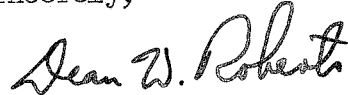
There is another hazard in the legislation to which I would like to call your attention, and on which I would like to have your reaction. This concerns the fact that every facility receiving construction grants must have the approval of the state rehabilitation agency. Unless the Bill is fairly specific with respect to priority to voluntary facilities, the state director would frequently be in the position of both presenting his case and judging it. He would be little more than human if he did not lean toward giving priority to his own application for funds. Amendment of the Bill to require the priority be given to plans for voluntary facilities when such plans exist, would seem to alleviate what might otherwise become in practice a questionable arrangement.

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What would your reaction be to an amendment which would take cognizance of the points which I have raised in this letter? Such an amendment might either strike out government agencies as recipients of construction grants or clearly direct that priority be given to applications from suitable voluntary agencies. Of the two devices, it seems to me that the latter is preferable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dean W. Roberts".

Dean W. Roberts, M.D.
Executive Director

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